



**Vancouver
Maritime Museum**

1905 Odgen Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 1A2
Phone 604 257-8300
Fax 604 737 2621

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

VANCOUVER MARITIME MUSEUM'S VISION MET BY PROPOSED NATIONAL MARITIME CENTRE

VANCOUVER, BC - January 11, 2006: The Vancouver Maritime Museum today publicly announced its support of the proposed National Maritime Centre on North Vancouver's waterfront. "Two years ago, we announced a vision for a new, expanded and relocated maritime museum on Vancouver's waterfront," said Ian Rokeby, President of the Vancouver Maritime Museum Society. "It was to be more than a museum. It was to be a centre for maritime activity, sustainable and easily accessible. That vision will be achieved with what is being proposed for North Vancouver."

Two separate studies, funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia honed the vision into a blueprint for what the new entity could be - an exciting, viable "National Maritime Centre" that celebrates Canada's Pacific gateway and its unique and diverse maritime culture, heritage and industry. The studies also looked at potential sites for the new centre.

The existing Vancouver Maritime Museum site suffers from lack of access, is in a residential and park setting, and is outdated and overcrowded. A City of Vancouver funded study in 1997 noted that the museum needed a new site and a major rebuild to meet public needs and to remain financially viable. The City asked the museum to look at its options, and the vision and the studies funded by the senior levels of Government have formed the museum's response.

"There was no available site in Vancouver for relocation or expansion," explained Rokeby. Project Manager Patricia Bowles noted that at the end of the first study, and during the site selection process, the City of North Vancouver made an unsolicited offer of the former site of the Versatile Shipyard. The second study, completed in December 2005, found that the North Vancouver site offered a viable and exciting location that would be financially sustainable and that offered a wide array of public benefits. The report also supports the North Shore site as the best regional location.

"We are now ready to proceed in consultation with other stakeholders, primarily the City of Vancouver. We would love to work with the City to find a way to showcase even more of the wonderful treasures that we have that we can't currently show and to show them to a national audience," said James Delgado, the museum's executive director.

The collections of the existing maritime museum belong to the City of Vancouver, and the museum is proposing a careful examination of the many internationally, nationally and regionally significant artifacts and holdings that could be loaned to the new centre. "That decision is up to the City of Vancouver," noted Delgado. "What we as the museum can also provide is a detailed sense of why these things are important, and the stories of the people behind them that bring history to life. What is envisioned is not moving the existing maritime museum to North Vancouver, but rather joining a consortium of partners to create something new that builds on the resources we have to offer."

Rokeby and Delgado stress that the new facility will not represent a loss for Vancouver or its citizens. "The Vancouver Maritime Museum Society will continue to work closely with the City of Vancouver to interpret the City's maritime history and culture, not only in this transitional period but in the years that follow." By engaging in partnerships with other museums and public facilities in Vancouver, we can display even more treasures and stories."

The existing museum, while situated in Vancouver, serves school children, the public and tourists throughout the Greater Vancouver region and beyond. "Over thirty percent of the existing museum's membership are North Shore residents," noted Delgado. "They have been served by an institution located in Vancouver, and a shift across Burrard Inlet would serve Vancouver-based members and citizens. A change in location for a maritime museum will not change the level of service to Vancouver and its schools - in fact, a more sustainable museum can offer even more to the public and especially to schools, including in classroom programs."

Rokeby and Bowles noted that the initiative for the future now rests firmly with the City of North Vancouver and a soon to be formed National Maritime Centre Society. "The Vancouver Maritime Museum Society will cooperate with the new society, the City of North Vancouver, and is excited that the vision we proposed will at last come to pass."

The Vancouver Maritime Museum is the principal maritime museum on the Pacific Coast of Canada and one of a few major maritime museums on the West Coast of North America. The Museum interprets the story of Canada's great Pacific port and its links with the Pacific Rim and is home to the famous RCMP ship, *St Roch*, which conquered the Arctic.

#

For more information:

Ian Rokeby, Chair, Board of Trustees
(604) 684 3282 irokeby@ch2m.com

James Delgado, Executive Director
(604) 257-8301 jpdelgado@vancouvermaritimemuseum.com

Debbie Tardiff, Director, Marketing and Public Relations
(250) 738-0188 dtardiff@shaw.ca

Vancouver Maritime Museum

1905 Ogden Avenue in Vanier Park, Vancouver, BC V6J 1A3
Visitor information 604 257-8300 www.vancouvermaritimemuseum.com